

*2012*



# Richland “Fitness In Total” Community Assessment

Prepared for  
Richland Fitness in Total Coalition  
By Scott Consulting Partners, LLC  
Richland Center, WI  
4/25/2012

In April 2011 Richland County received a “Development” grant from the University of Wisconsin Community-Academic Partnership Program. After one year of funding the project goal is to have an engaged community academic partnership ready to implement a strategic plan of evidence based strategies to reduce the obesity epidemic in Richland County. To reach this goal the project will;

- 1) Organize a coalition with representation from a wide variety of community sectors
- 2) Complete a community assessment regarding assets and challenges to physical activity and healthy eating
- 3) Create a written strategic plan using evidence based strategies to take action for a healthier weight

The following *Richland “Fitness in Total” Community Assessment* is an in-depth look at factors leading to obesity in our community. Grounded in the socio-ecological model of behavior change, our assessment focuses on the 5 spheres of influence in a person’s life: Individual, Intrapersonal, Organizational, Community and Public Policy. The assessment plan used multiple participatory data collection methods to gain personal perspectives of what promotes and hinders healthy lifestyle behaviors within all spheres of influence. Activities included are as follows:

**Policy and Environment Assessments: (Organizational, Community and Public Policy)** the assessment team developed surveys for employers to rank their efforts on specific worksite policies and environments regarding physical activity and nutrition. The surveys are modeled after the CHANGE and ENACT policy and environmental audits used by other counties in Wisconsin but were edited for time reasons. Surveys were sent electronically and followed up with interviews to discuss answers and gauge interest in worksite wellness programs.

**Photo Voice Project: (Intrapersonal, Organizational and Community)** photo voice projects allow individuals to capture aspects of their environment and experiences in pictures then create a caption to describe the photo from their point of view. This is a unique project that allows members of the community to gain a deeper understanding of an issue and to use their ‘voice’ to raise questions, provide solutions, or show support for specific issues. Our assessment team recruited 8 youth and 3 adults in the community to take part in our project which focused on physical activity and nutrition. Group discussion helped us determine actions for the coalition to take to promote health throughout the community.

**Focus Groups: (Organizational, Community, Policy)** focus groups are structured meetings to find out opinions, needs and ideas about specific topics. Small groups were recruited to help us unfold the barriers/assets in our community related to physical activity and healthy eating. The conversations generated ideas for strategies to create a healthier county and focused on residents living outside of Richland Center.

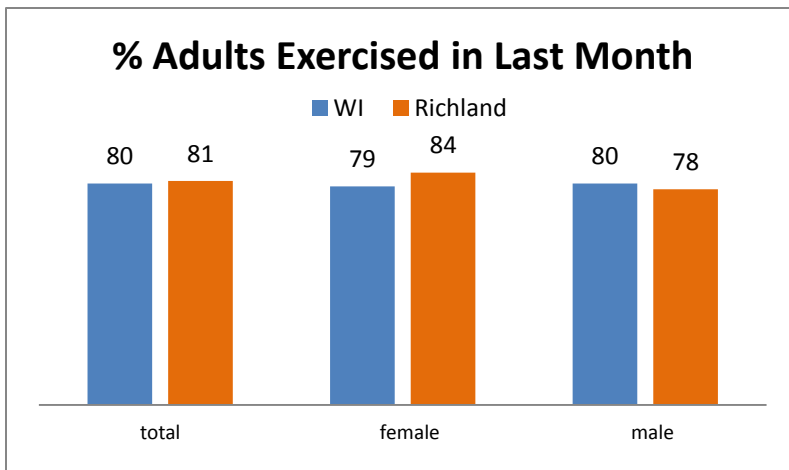
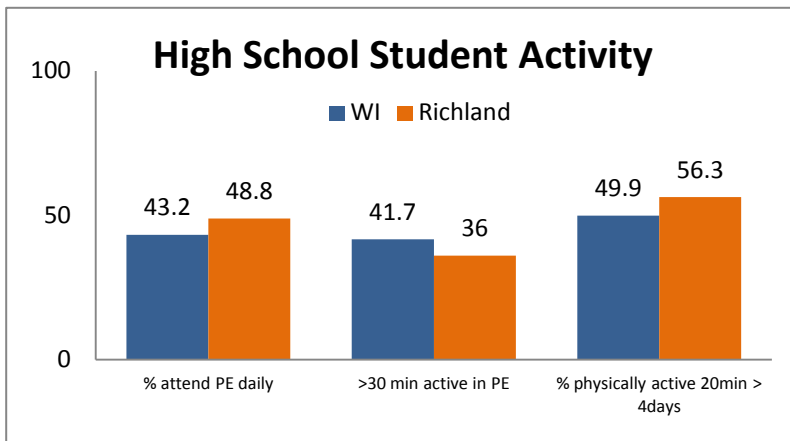
**Interviews with Community Members: (Organizational, Community, Policy)** throughout the community needs assessment process community leaders were interviewed to provide information about organizations and programs that exist in our community. Sharing our project with organizations that have a history in Richland County will help to connect our initiatives/strategies to groups who already have a presence in the community.

The following report is organized using the 6 behaviors designated by the Wisconsin Department of Health as risk factors for overweight and obesity. Each page is set up in the following format:

1. State and County Wide Data
2. Chart showing assets and challenges for each behavior. Following each entry are the initials of which component of the assessment we collected the information from.
  - FG: Focus groups/community leader interviews
  - PV: Photo voice project
  - A: Policy/Environmental assessments
3. Suggestions from our focus group and photo voice participants on actions to take to help our community live healthier lives.
4. Brilliant pictures taken by our photo voice group along with captions they prepared to describe the photos.

The information in this report will be the backbone for the development of Richland FIT's strategic plan. As we move forward in our planning process our coalition will prioritize the 6 behaviors, develop goals and specific evidence based strategies that are realistic for Richland County to take action toward addressing overweight and obesity.

## Increase physical activity



Assets- "What Helps Us"	Deficits: "What Hinders Us"
3 Fitness centers FG PV	Lack of time – FG biggest barrier, also PV
Bike/walking paths community & worksites, FG	Closed high school campus (inactive study halls and lunch), PV
Complete streets policy A,	No safe routes to school, lack of school PE policies A
Joint use agreements w/school, A	Dangerous biking along roads (no shoulders), FG
School/worksites fitness discount and some insurance incentive programs (optional) A	Lack of awareness of assets, FG PV (Canoe)
School sports, PV 4H chores FG	Car culture -Having to drive everywhere (rural) FG
Having active job FG	Winter season FG
Recreational activities in Richland Center PV	Lack of bike/walking in townships outside Richland Center, FG
Family /friend/social support to be active FG PV	Lack of worksite flex time promoting physical fitness A
Coaches PV	Poor upkeep of some town/city parks make them unappealing PV

### Ideas from Focus Groups & PhotoVoice

Homes: have exercise equipment in front of the TV, move TV out of living room, create family activity time

Schools: create safe route to school, increase physical activity throughout the day, activities for kids <5, encourage active study halls (open campus to walking paths, gym)

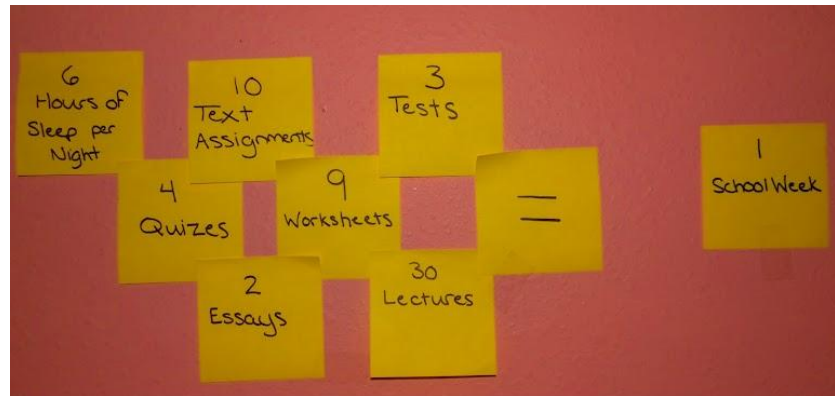
Worksites: encourage teams/groups for physical activity, policies for flex time to exercise or use available walking paths

Community: create biking/walking paths in townships, increase awareness/promotion of resources that already exist (use small & mass media), create bike lanes paths along highways, provide bikes/canoes that can be rented for free or a small fee, indoor track, more fishing (promotes both healthy eating and activity), reduce cost of fitness memberships and add to Badgercare/insurance, Social support- community events that promote activity, walking clubs

**Study hall – can be sitting around or active!**



**What is our biggest barrier to being active? TIME...**



**...and dangerous roads for walking and biking, especially outside of town.**



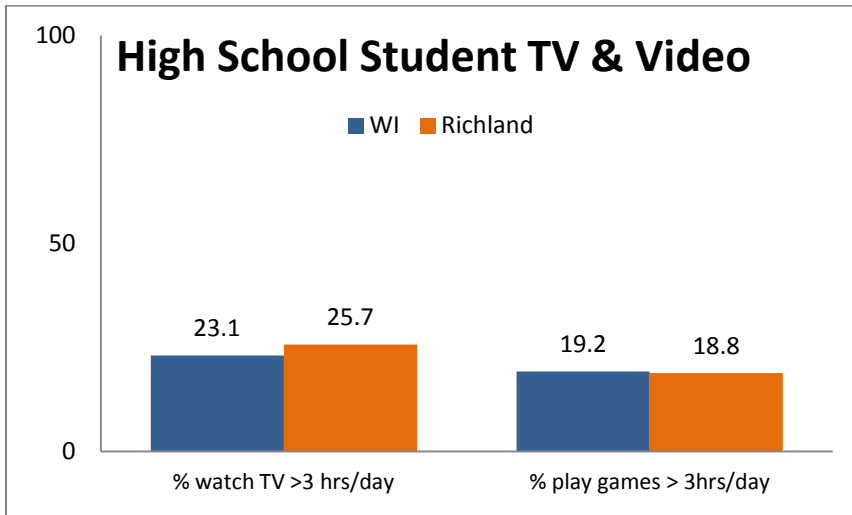
**Great resources...**

**but many go unused – “Have you ever used these canoe launches?”**





## Reduce TV viewing

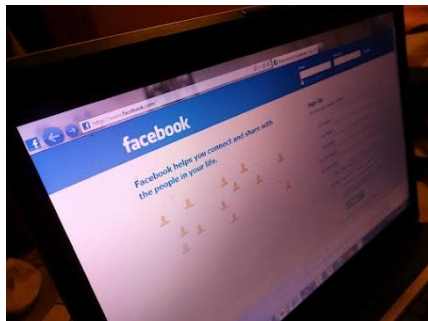


Assets- "What Helps Us"	Deficits: "What Hinders Us"
Having after school activities PV	TV comfortable at home PV
Using the TV to exercise PV	Great TV & video game equipment PV
	Must have Facebook time PV
	Being alone at home – no one to play with and TV helps with loneliness PV
	TV show marathons

### Ideas from Focus Groups & PhotoVoice

Putting exercise equipment by TV or in front of TV, moving TV out of living area PV

### What keeps you from being active?



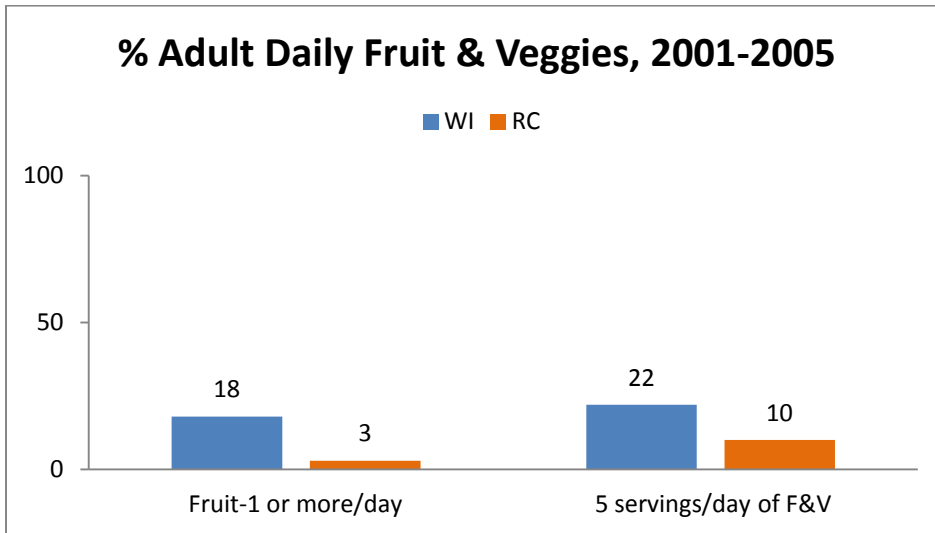
HS student caption "Why go outside when you have all this?"



### Stay active in front of the TV



## Increase fruit & vegetable access, availability, and consumption



### Additional data

- 40% of HS youth reported not eating salad during the past week
- Farmers markets twice a week during the summer in Richland Center
- Access to groceries: 4 grocery stores sell fresh fruits and vegetable, one gas station sells limited fresh produce
- (USDA) Access to retail fresh food: % low income and >1 mile to store: 25%

Assets- "What Helps Us"	Deficits: "What Hinders Us"
Farmers Markets FG	Cost of fresh fruits & veggies FG
Having fruit washed & ready to eat PV	Distance to town/ buy 2 weeks of food (canned) FG
WIC program FG	Don't like taste FG
Food Pantry FG	Prepackaged snacks easier/also promoted to kids PV
Supermarkets PV	Cheap fast food options FG PV
Good salad bar in high school PV	Poor produce in salad bars at middle & elementary school PV
Fruit/veggie program in school PV	Poor produce in fruit/veggie program in school PV
Pride in locally grown/farming culture PV	Lack of lunch time at elementary, encourages bad eating habits PV, A
Town/school supported gardens FG A	Lack of school policies on healthy options A

### Ideas from Focus Groups & PhotoVoice

Home: set aside family time to prepare fruits and veggies for the coming week, find ways to get fresh food out to townships more conveniently, teaching to eat veggies reinforced both at home & schools

School: use good produce in salad bar, give more time for lunch, address junk food availability, kids participate in food prep (cutting fresh veggies & fruit), better kitchen facilities in middle and elementary schools

Worksites: policies on healthy vending and cafeteria/food options (hospital, Rockwell and county working on this)

Community: hold weekend sessions at community center to get together and prepare fruits/veggies for the coming week ( in conjunction with this, have grocers/city/community groups work together to do fruit or veggie promotion that would reduce the price and then have the prep time set up as well), encourage community center space and kitchen for people from out of town to use between activities (warm their own food rather than go to McD), Group gardening projects in rural townships, include education for WIC women on using Farmer's Market produce, have convenience stores do specials on produce (not donuts & pizza), find and promote healthy options at local restaurants, support local food through pride in heritage

Home

Ready to eat healthy snacks



School



Popular HS salad bar



Fresh fruit and veggie program at elementary school



Kids have only minutes to eat their lunch and fresh salad takes time to make and to eat, so salad often stays on the plate



Elementary and Middle school lunch -not much fresh here and packed lunch is even worse



Community



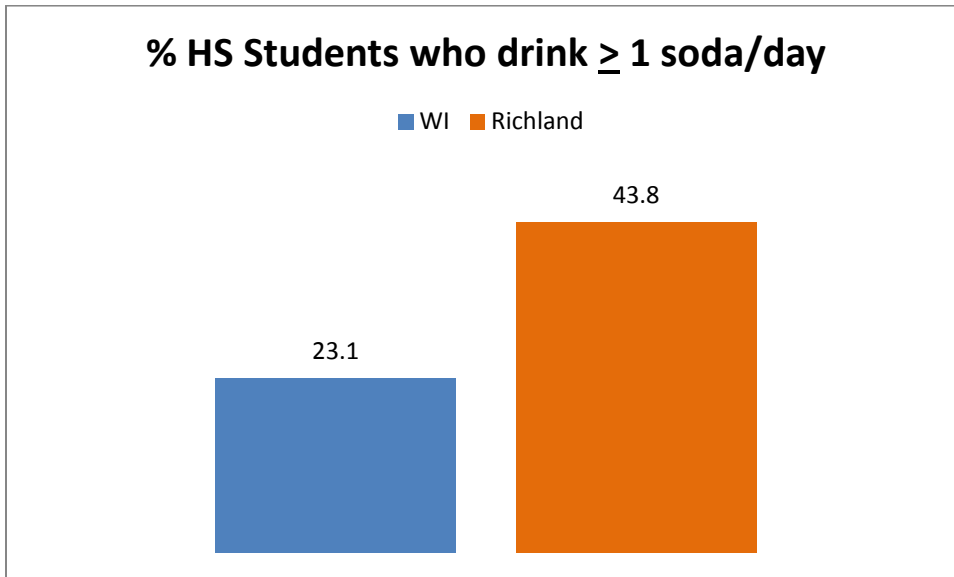
Mixed message - packaged unhealthy snacks next to fruit encourages kids to get both



Quality fresh fruits and veggies available in town – at grocery stores and some gas stations too



## Reduce sugar sweetened beverage consumption (pop)



Additional data:

In a survey of 72 high school seniors at the “Get Real” event in March 2012, we found that 58% reported drinking soda at least once a day. Of those:

- 78% drank sugared, not diet drinks
- 45% reported drinking soda at home, 10% at school and 31% “everywhere” or “with friends”

Assets- “What Helps Us”	Deficits: “What Hinders Us”
Culture of drinking milk FG	Cheap & available at home PV,
Offer only healthy options PV (discussion)	Cheap & available at school (mostly non-diet), “reward” is access to pop PV
Water options PV	Cheap & available in community, vending on every corner PV
	Promotions and advertising PV,FG
	We love our soda! PV, FG
	No eating breakfast but having soda instead PV

### Ideas:

Home: work with parents to help keep kids from developing the “taste” for soda, educational campaign to reduce soda drinking at home, get doctors and dentists in town to “prescribe” water or unsweetened beverages

School: bans (but some people would get upset), education on calories, advertising campaign for healthy drinks (only see soda or unhealthy drink ads), advertising geared to youth (e.g., dental health show mountain dew =yellow teeth), stop selling mostly sugared options at concession stands, stop selling for fundraising

Community: advertising/education on healthy drinks/make water appealing, formal/informal policies for availability at social gatherings, soda tax going to fund programs, reduce placement and promotions

Home

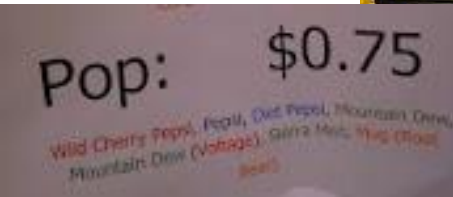
School packed lunch- mostly soda?!



Soda soda everywhere and not a drop (of healthy stuff) to drink!

School

A la carte

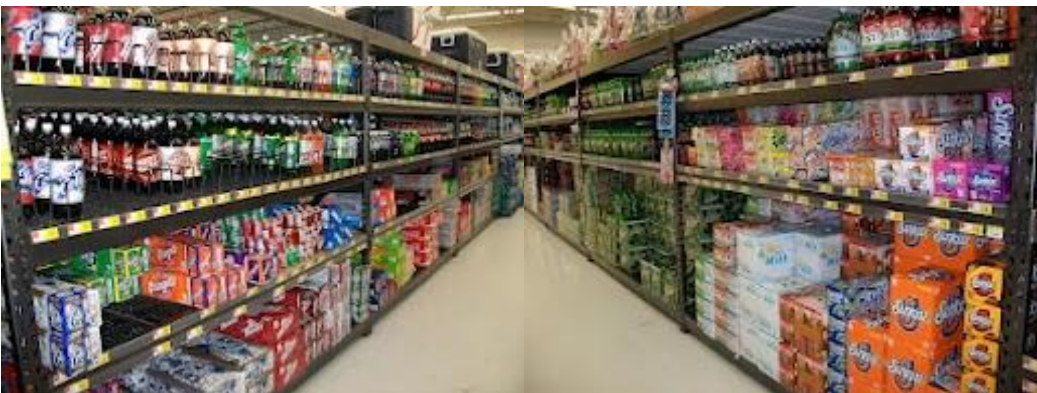


Only one diet option!

Business students sell soda – popular!



Community



Vending machines—more than one—everywhere you turn!



## Reduce energy dense food consumption (junk food)

- 59% (10 out of 17) of current RC restaurants that are fast food/mixed. Four of the full service feature all you can eat buffet and all of them would require asking for special preparation to make healthy meals.
  - [USDA county: 7/17 (2007) 71% and 7/11(2008) 61%]
- 10 busy convenience stores with quick food items [USDA]

Assets- "What Helps Us"	Deficits: "What Hinders Us"
Eating at home FG	Lack of time/skills to cook healthy FG PV
Raising your own food/Having a garden FG	Availability in community PV including churches FG
Cooking your own food FG	Availability at school and work PV
Having healthy options available PV	Traveling/busy schedules keep away from home FG
Early exposure to fresh vegetables FG PV	"Trained" from young age to love fast food PV
Social support for healthy eating FG	Abundance of convenience stores A
Chef at school and school garden PV, FG	More money for promoting unhealthy options PV
	No worksite or school policies on healthy food A
	Pop and snacks sold as fundraisers in schools PV
	Ads for fast food PV
	Cheap and fast PV, FG

### Ideas:

Home: prepare fresh food for the week, use crock pots, garden produce, cooking classes

School – use non food items for rewards and for fund raising, use local products for fundraising, ban on sugar sweetened beverages on campus, find funding/ways to improve school lunches for middle and elementary campuses, continue using Chef at Weston and the garden at Ithaca, soda tax, have fresh fruits and healthy foods at breakfast

Worksites – promote policies that reduce snacks and increase healthy options in vending, policies that require healthier options for contracted food service, provide insurance incentives e.g. reimburse for CSAs

### Community:

New restaurants/businesses that offer healthy choices (e.g., homemade take-out store for bake at home healthy items)

Current restaurants and convenience stores –

- Menu labeling (e.g., 500 club in Lacrosse)
- NU –VAL labels - nutrition value of the food on a scale of 1-100 (e.g., Festival foods in Lacrosse) Placement and promotion of healthy items, especially fresh fruits and vegetables
- Eliminate placement and promotion of high calorie foods
- Offer smaller portion sizes that don't cost as much

More farmers' markets on all sides of town and in townships (mobile markets or schedule at gas stations)

Using the community center space to heat leftovers for people from rural township who have to stay in town

Enhance social supports for healthy eating, e.g., have groups that cook/prepare food together for the week

Work with church groups and other social gatherings to have healthy options, especially with children attending

City and townships support gardening space and equipment/composting

Can we find a recipe for healthy pizza?

Regulation on labeling, e.g., sugared cereals that say "high fiber" prominently on box/label



Early messages about food –

Adult caption: “A child’s toy?”



School fundraisers rely on sugared sweets

Business students in-school store



Soccer fundraiser - treats



Should this be the “choice for healthy eating?”

Elementary snack time



Middle school al carte

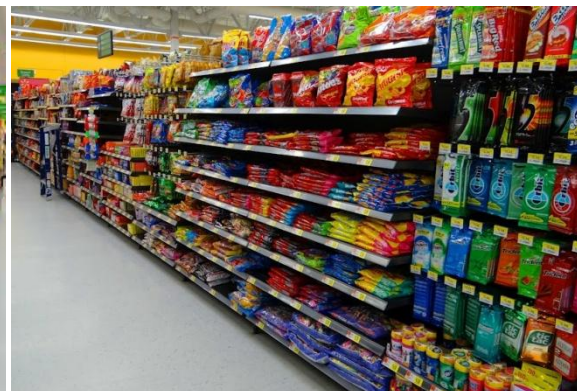


High school “healthy” vending Work “vending”



TIME, a major barrier to cook & eat healthy meals, so folks use quick-cook packaged food, eat in their cars, or pick up unhealthy fast food options readily available

Ubiquitous snacks



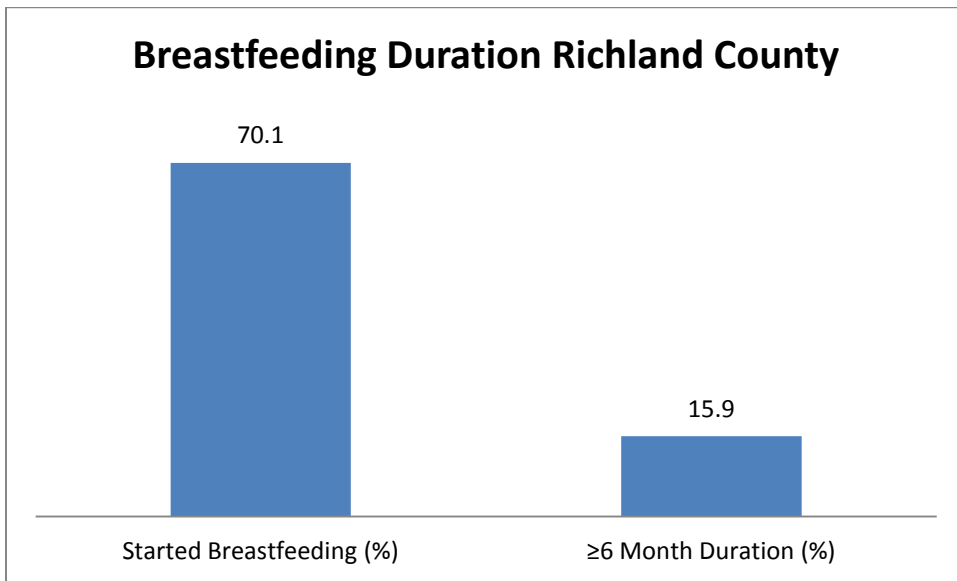
...and promoted as “saving”





## *Increase breastfeeding*

In Richland County, 70.1 % ever breast feed, but only 15.9% were still breastfeeding 6 months or longer.



No additional data collected

Note: A Coalition is working on this issue in the area

## Reduce portion size

No data

*Cultural Consideration:* No “direct” data collected but was a part of the discussion regarding Richland Center’s strong farming history (FG). Historically farmer’s are used to cooking for a very active lifestyle when it made sense to eat large portions in mid-day before going back into the fields– now even field work is sitting on the tractor rather than being out behind the horses. Baked goods provided calories that were needed for the physical labor and pies/cakes, breads were an important source of pride for farm women. Some of the 4H FG participants are still doing chores but are not full-time farmers.

PhotoVoice picture of portion sizes shows how the size of the plate makes a big difference psychologically.

**Same amount of food – what a difference a plate makes.**



**Promoting “More”**



Ideas

Home/School/Community: create awareness/mindfulness about portions, e.g., point of purchase education on calories, activity needed to burn it off, etc.

Community: work with restaurants to add smaller portion sizes to menu, work with groceries/convenience stores re: “jumbo” size muffins, bagels, etc., work with grocers to stop so many soda sales (set rate for soda sales per oz)

**HS Caption: Why buy a small size when large is the same price?**





A special thank you to our Photo Voice group members! Without your dedication, great photos and excellent discussions we could not have completed this report.

Members include (pictured left to right) Top Row: Sterling Kleist, Sheri Scott, Dana Churchill, Acacia Berg, Lora Schultz, Patrick Metz, Jenny Volden, Sharon Long. Bottom Row: Julia Wenham, Shyla Honer, Ibraheem Nadeem, Austin Rider, Rosie Smith.

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